

1507/629.

THE

NATURAL SON;

A

COMEDY.



THE
NATURAL SON:

A
COMEDY.

PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

BY RICHARD CUMBERLAND, ESQ.

C O R K :

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P R O L O G U E.

By the A U T H O R.

Spoken by Mr. BANNISTER.

*T*H*E* comic Muse, as Cyprian records prove,
Was Comus' daughter, by the Queen of Love;
A left-hand lineage—whilst the tragic Dame
From legal loins of father Vulcan came;
Therefore this Muse loves frolic, fun, and joke;
That bellows blowing, blustering, puff, and smoke;
—Hence mother Nature's bye-begotten stock
Are all but chips of the old comic block;
For all derive their pedigrees in tail
From fathers frolicsome and mothers frail.
—Therefore, if in this brat of our's you trace
Some feature of his merry mother's face,
Sure, sons of Comus, sure you'll let him in
To your gay brotherhood; as founder's kin.

A married Muse!—no; Muses are too wise
To take a poet's jointure in the skies,
Th' anticipation of an unborn play,
Or star-sown acres in the milky way:
So each lives single, like a cloyster'd nun,
But does sometimes as other nuns have done—
Prays with grave authors, with the giddy prates,
Or ogles a young poet thro' the grates.

Therefore our rule is, never to enquire
Who begat whom, what dam, or which the sire;
But, soon as e'er the babe breathes vital air,
Take him, and never ask how he got there.
Some are still-born; some sent to mother Earth,
Strangled by critic midwives in their birth;
And many an unacknowledg'd foundling lies
Without a parent's hand to close its eyes:
Thus are our bills with deaths dramatic cramm'd,
And, what is worse—to die is to be damn'd.

You, the Humane Society, who sit
To mitigate the casualties of wit,
Save a frail Muse's NATURAL SON from death!—
He lives on fame, and fame lives on your breath.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SIR JEFFRY LATIMER,	Mr. BADDELEY,
BLUSHENLY, —	Mr. PALMER.
RUEFULL, —	Mr. BENSLEY.
JACK HUSTINGS, —	Mr. KING.
MAJOR O'FLAHERTY, —	Mr. MOODY.
DUMPS, — —	Mr. PARSONS.
DAVID, — —	Mr. WRIGHTEN.

MRS. PHOEBE LATIMER,	Miss POPE.
LADY PARAGON, —	Miss FARREN.
PENELOPE, —	Miss TIDSWELL.

SERVANTS, &c.

TIME, that of the Representation.

SCENE, Sir Jeffry Latimer's Country House.



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ACT I.

SCENE *a Library.*—Mrs. Phoebe Latimer *discovered at a table with books, reading.*

Enter Penelope, after gently tapping at the door.

MRS. PHOEBE.

WHO's there?—Come in, Mrs. Penelope!—
Come in without ceremony.

Pen. I beg pardon for disturbing you, Madam; but my Lady ordered me to bring her a book out of the library.

Phoebe. What book does Lady Paragon wish to have?

Pen. Any that comes first to hand, French or English.

Phoebe. Is she fond of reading poems?

Pen. If they are moving.

Phæbe. A Lady's productions, I doubt, are not so apt to move, else I shou'd recommend this collection.

Pen. A Lady write poems! I wonder any Lady will do such a thing, 'tis sure destruction to the complexion.—Doctor Calomel says, a lady, to preserve her beauty, should not even think; he has wrote a book purposely to dissuade people from reading.

Phæbe. Every book he writes will do that. So far however I subscribe to his maxims, as cautiously to engage in any work of intense hot thinking, lest the fire of the imagination should force its way into the face, and the flag of the rose be made to predominate over the wreck of the lily.

Pen. Then, as sure as can be, that's my Lady Paragon's reason for employing Mr. Blushenly to read to her.

Phæbe. So, so! she employs *him*, does she?

Pen. Oh, yes, Ma'm, Mr. Blushenly sits with my Lady, and reads to her by the hour.

Phæbe. Humph! then depend upon it 'tis not to save her eyes that she employs Mr. Blushenly; I rather think it is to satisfy them.

Pen. Mr. Blushenly is a very handsome man, to be sure.

Phæbe. You think so; and you are generally of your Lady's way of thinking, are you not?

Pen. 'Twould be no disparagement to my taste, if I were.

Phæbe. On the contrary, Mrs Penelope, your Lady and my niece is a professed admirer of beauty, so great a one, that she admires even herself;—she may like to gratify her ears as well as her eyes by employing Mr. Blushenly; so, now that we have accounted for two of her five senses in the interest of the reader, we need not seek for other reasons, Mrs. Penelope, why you should carry this book to the Lady;—and why I should intercept the Gentleman from following it.

Pen. A malicious thing! she's in love with him herself. (*aside.*)

[Exit.
MRS.

MRS. PHOEBE *alone.*

These confidential *commies* of the toilette are sure to talk the language of their principals. Not that I suspect my niece of an attachment,—that's not her passion; vanity and variety is her game.—Then the condition of poor Blushenly keeps him back; a dependant, a foundling, destitute of every thing but what the Graces have bestowed; Nature his only parent, Charity his nurse, and the wide world his inheritance.

Enter Blushenly, and bows.

Mr. Blushenly, good day to you!

Blush. Your most obedient, Mrs. Phœbe; always amongst your books! ever at the toilette of the Muses!

Phœbe. Yes, Mr. Blushenly, my beauty-wash is culled from the blossoms of Parnassus; Truth holds the glass, Nature gives the grace. The mind, the mind, Mr. Blushenly, must be clothed, and here is its wardrobe; 'tis with that we attract the regards of the man of sense, with that we hold commerce with the worthy: misconstrue not my expression; the soul, young gentleman, the soul is of no sex.

Blush. I am sorry for it, Mrs. Phœbe; for I have been apt to think all its softer attributes were of your department. Admit your doctrine to be true, and what becomes of the good old proverb, "Love begets love," if there be no sex in the question?

Phœbe. I like your proverb, I admit your proverb, I admit it in its full force, Mr. Blushenly; there is not a postulatium in philosophy I had not rather give up, than have you think for a moment that these tender attentions can be bestowed upon an unthankful heart.

Blush. Oh the vengeance! what is coming now?

(aside.)

Phœbe. They are not lost, believe me: not a tear that springs in your eye, not a sigh that escapes from

your breast, but generates in mine a congenial affection.—I appeal to what pass'd last night whilst I was at the harpsichord: you may remember the cantata was Parthenia's encouraging address to her bashful lover: I noticed the looks you gave me whilst I was singing; I felt them, you may perceive I did; they gave a meaning, an expression to the cadence: it might not reach perhaps to barbarous ears, but I am persuaded, Mr. Blushenly, it came home to your's.

Blush. The ears, Madam, are the most dangerous avenues to the heart; your sex, as well as mine, have found them such to their cost.

Phæbe. The human voice, Mr. Blushenly, was not bestowed as the mere organ of speech, but as the oral index of the soul.—You have a sweet voice, Mr. Blushenly; and what a recreation to my ears, after being tortured with the cracked untuneable trumpet of my brother, Sir Jeffry Latimer, the hoarse hunting horn of Jack Hustings, and the quarter-sessions yell of our neighbouring country squires, to hear you speak!—Thanks be to the times! these indigenous barbarians are in the way to be exterminated by taxes, as the Indian savages have been by rum.

Blush. Upon my word, Mrs. Phæbe, your partiality puts me to the blush.

Phæbe. And it becomes you; blushing becomes you: not that I approve of diffidence in excess, the least resemblance of despair; no, on the contrary, I would encourage hope, I would cherish even ambition.—There is one in this family, Mr. Blushenly, warmly impressed in your favour: let not distance of condition, nor the inscrutable mysteriousness of your birth, put you out of heart; you have qualities that can counterbalance fortune; and you have a friend at hand, who bears you much good-will, more than you are aware of; more than it becomes her to express—more, perhaps, than she can express—Oh! I shall blush to death!

Enter

Enter LADY PARAGON reading.

LADY PARAGON.

" O'er her soft cheek consenting blushes move,
 " And with kind stealth her secret soul betray;
 " Blushes, which usher in the morn of love,
 " Sure as the red'ning east foretels the day."

(AIKIN.)

—Thank you for your female poet! thus we women write.—Blushenly, have you aired my lap-dog? that's all you men are fit for.

Phæbe. How long has Lady Paragon been of that opinion?—Vexatious and perverse! (*aside.*)

Lady P. Her Ladyship has been of that opinion long enough to change it—half an hour.

Phæbe. I thought it would not be your lasting creed.

Lady P. Ah no, no, no! Woman's a riddle, my good aunt, and so is love: to love and be a woman, that's not well; to be a woman, and not love, that's worse.—Here, Blushenly, put this book in your pocket, and come and read to me whilst I dress myself.

Phæbe. Lady Paragon, are you aware of what you say?

Lady P. Not always; but I think I bade him come and read to me whilst I am at my toilette; by which means I divide my attention between mind and body, and keep pace with both parties: out of two offices I think I have civilly offered him the best.—She's in a horrid humour. (*aside.*)

Phæbe. Well, niece, these may be modern manners: for my part, I should think you have already bestowed pains enough upon your person for one day.

Lady P. True; but I dress and undress myself as a child does her doll, for amusement.

Phæbe. And do you invite young gentlemen to be present on those occasions for amusement too?

Lady P. No, I do it for his good: when he shall

see what frippery a woman is made up with; what a pasticcio of gauzes, pins and ribands go to compound that multifarious thing a well-dressed woman; why then—why then—what was I going to say?—he will find that modern beauty is but haberdasher's ware; and if ever he had any gallantry (which I very much doubt) he'll be cur'd of it at once, and you may lead him up and down the house like a tame philosopher.—Is n't it so, Blushenly?

Blush. I hope I shall never forget myself, when I approach your Ladyship or Miss Phœbe.

Lady P. Look you there, now; did n't I tell you he was fit for nothing but to air a lady's lap-dog?

Phœbe. I perceive you are in one of your rallying humours, and want to be rid of me.

Lady P. Not I, upon my life!—part not in that opinion: I talk nonsense only to drive away spleen; be assured I never was in a more melancholy mood in my life.

Phœbe. I am sorry, niece Paragon, your father's family is so dull to you.

Lady P. Misconceive me not; I have every thing I want, but one, and without that I starve in the midst of plenty.

Phœbe. And what is that one thing wanting, pray now?

Lady P. Flattery: simply the food of flattery; not a full meal that is nauseating, but evermore a little relish now and then: truth is the daily bread, the staff of life, flattery the salt.—As for this moping mortifying thing, I can make nothing of him; a way-post has more conversation.—“I hope I shall never forget myself, when I approach your Ladyship or Miss Phœbe.”—Oh you unaccountable creature! may I be further, if he has said one flattering thing to me since in the house I have been.

Blush. Nor ever shall attempt it: fine men may make fine speeches, a flattering beggar only shews his mind is as mean as his condition.

Lady P. Nay, if you talk sentiment to me, Blush-

only,

only, you'll set me a crying; hands off from that edg'd tool, if you love me. Sentiment in the country is clear another thing from sentiment in town: in my box at the Opera I can take it as glibly as a dish of tea, down it goes, and there's an end of it; but in walks of willows, and by the side of rivulets, there is no joke in it; I'm undone if I hear it by moon-light. —Of all things in the creation I hate pity.

Phæbe. Did I ever hear the like? Pity is the characteristic of our sex.

Blush. Right, Madam, it is the sister of Love.

Lady P. Well, and if it is, because I take one of the family, is that a reason I should maintain all the relations?—Heaven defend me from pitying any thing above a lap-dog or a monkey!

Phæbe. Oh for a shame! would you throw that away upon a brute which is due to your fellow-creatures?—Believe me, Mr. Blushenly, I have a heart for pity, and your misfortunes have a share in it.

Lady P. O lud, lud, lud! I would not pity him for the world; I would not do him such an injury; for as sure as can be, if I pitied I should love him; and if I lov'd him, all the world would pity him.

Blush. Envy him, you should have said: how any man belov'd by Lady Paragon can be an object of pity, is a mystery past my finding out.

Lady P. That may well be, and no great mystery neither; as for my lovers, they are in general the merriest gayest creatures in nature; for, as I seldom take a liking to any of them, I seldom torment 'em; but if ever that happens, woe betide 'em! no cat ever tortur'd a mouse as I persecute the poor dear miserable creature.—So now you are fairly warn'd, Blushenly; and if you run into a trap, you run with your eyes open. [*Lady Paragon is going, and stops at the door.*] Well, I'm going—If you are discreet you will not go with me—but if you are determin'd to venture, here lies your way.—What say you? will you venture?—Aunt Phæbe, your servant. [*Exit.*]

Phæbe. Mr. Blushenly, let me advise you—you see

what a fantastical thing it is—I have something to impart to you.—Nay, if you are resolv'd—go—I renounce you—I commit you to your folly.—Oh! I cou'd tear out her eyes! I am betray'd, abus'd, insulted.

[Blushenly during these speeches stands silent, and in apparent suspence; at length hastily escapes, and follows Lady Paragon.]

Enter Sir Jeffry Latimer,

You have a notable wife, head of your own, have you not?—Cackling like an old gander, with but one gosling to your back, and then to set that fox, dropt in a bag at your door, to keep it.

Sir Jeff. Why, what the plague's the meaning of all this?

Phæbe. The meaning is, that, not content with what Nature did for you, you will be a fool of your own making.—The meaning is, that you have rear'd, educated, father'd this *Terræ-filius* to bring heirs to the Latimers, children of nobody, and grandchildren without a name.

Sir Jeff. What wou'd you have me do in the matter?

Phæbe. Send a herald to the moon, from whence he dropt, and search the office there, before you let this foundling quarter arms with a family as ancient as the monarchy.

Sir Jeff. Here's an outcry about nothing!—Look out, and satisfy yourself.—There they are in the garden, innocently plucking a little fruit.

Phæbe. Yes, o' my conscience, the forbidden fruit.—But I'll not look out; I can't endure to see them: your daughter's danger brings the tears into my eyes.

Sir Jeff. I believe you are in most danger of the two yourself.—Never tell me! 'tis all rank jealousy.

Phæbe. Rank, folly, Jeffry Latimer!—But I will be more moderate.—Why did you call him home from the university?—Why did you send him thither?—I'll argue calmly with you—Is it not enough, that she has

Sir Jeff. Yes; but I doubt that match was of our making, sister Phœbe. Let her chuse next for herself, and she will have nobody but herself to complain of.

Phæbe. Fine arguing!—Brother, brother, you are *ignoramus*, or, as the Poet sings—

Sir Jeff. Damn the Poet!

Phæbe. Oaths are no arguments, Jeffry Latimer: mere *brutum fulmen*, as the Logicians have it.

Sir Jeff. Damn the Logicians!

Phæbe. Now I am cool, you are hot!—How often, brother Latimer, have I talk'd to you on the subject of passion? Have not I told you that the wise Ancients call anger a short madness? You had best abuse them too, had you not?

Sir Jeff. No, no, not in your company; I have too much manners to abuse the Ancients to their faces.

Phæbe. You have no manners, Jeffry Latimer; no one component particle of a gentleman about you, but the pedigree of one: then you swear and talk so loud, and have contracted such a yell at turnpike meetings and election ordinaries, that, I protest to you, if I did not see you be-perriwig'd with the mane of a lion, I shou'd think by your braying I was in company with an ass.

Sir Jeff. I wish I had the patience of an ass.—Talk of my perriwig indeed! look at your own.—What are all those flags and streamers but Cupid's artillery in ambuscade? men-traps and marriage-guns in every curl.

Phæbe. Don't be gross, Jeffry Latimer, don't be gross.—I'll not be made the butt of your ribaldry, nor the dupe of your avarice; I'll take my fortune into my own hands, and not leave it as a nest egg to hatch cuckows of another feather than my own. You are a barren bird, brother Jeffry; your line is run out, and you are the worm at the end of it; you are the last of the Latimers, an evanescent quantity, as the Schoolmen express it: you stand at the foot of a noble pedigree, like a brass farthing in a collection of rich medals.

Sir Jeff. And what will you do for my pedigree?—a second deluge cannot stop it more effectually.

Phabe. I'll tell you what I'll do—live to my own liking: I've sacrific'd the morning of my day to your humours, noon and evening I'll dedicate to my own.

Exit.

Sir Jeff. 'Fore Heaven you make a long day of it, if it's only noon with you yet! well, David, what's the best news with you?

Enter David.

David. An' please your worship, Mr. Hustings is come to dine with you.

Sir Jeff. My honest friend Jack Hustings! where is he?

David. In the steward's parlour, putting the fowling-pieces in order: he has brought a brace of trout of his own hooking, wou'd do your heart good to see them.

Sir Jeff. That's well, that's well! fly-fishing is in season, and then my friend Jack never comes empty-handed.—But I must have a word in private with you—shut the door.—You and I, David, have kept this secret of young Blushenly, as we call him, now these twenty years and upwards; the neighbours think him a bye-brat of my own (for the old story of a foundling dropt at my door gets no credit with them) and the education I have given him, which has been such in all points as I wou'd have given my own son, strengthens their suspicions: in all this time, my cousin Frances Latimer, though she has liberally maintain'd him in secret, has never seen him.

David. And, if report says true, she is likely to go out of the world without it.

Sir Jeff. So she does but acknowledge him at her death, be it so! My last letters out of Flanders left her in a very dangerous way.—How long ago is it, David, since my daughter's husband, Lord Paragon,

David A year and a half to a day, next Larmmas.

Sir Jeff. 'Twas a happy riddance: and what the world wou'd think a misfortune (that she had no children by him) I account a blessing; for I wou'd fain have a grandson of my own name and family to inherit my estate.

David. I thought your worship was coming to that point; there is no male living of the name of Latimer, unless you call Mr. Blushenly so, in right of his mother.

Sir Jeff. And what is he but a Latimer? Why have I brought him and Lady Paragon together, think you, but in this very hope?—I have the pleasure to see their attachment advance every hour.

David. I can readily believe it: and a lovely couple they will be as the sun ever saw; a fine gentleman he is, and a kind-hearted and a handsome; no flouter nor flerer at poor folks, but always humble and obliging: all the neighbours love him, all the poor bless him; and, for my own part—but I say little; it does not become a servant to be prating—I ask your worship's pardon for my boldness.

Sir Jeff. David, you have no need to ask pardon; I consider you as a friend rather than a servant—but we'll talk of this at our leisure—Get you gone for the present; I hear Jack Hustings at the door. [*Ex. David.*]

Enter Jack Hustings.

Ah, Jack! how runs the world with thee?

Jack. Rubs as it runs. How is it, Knight?—give me thy fore-finger: I am come to rumple a napkin with thee.

Sir Jeff. And thou shalt be as welcome, my good friend, as to-day and to-morrow into the bargain.

Jack. I know it, I know it well, else I would not come.—I have brought thee a brace of trout, Knight; they are the first I've taken this season, and I'll warrant 'em as pink as a petticoat;—shew'd noble play; up the stream and down the stream:—a cloud in the

sky, a ripple on the water ;—here stood I ; you know my old watch ; snaps the word—never miss my throw. —Hast got a good breed of birds on thy manor this season ?

Sir Jeff. Tolerable, tolerable, a pretty fairish parcel.

Jack. So much the better ; I'll come and brush the stubbles for thee in a week or two's time. I have been putting your fowling-pieces in order, for your armoury was in sad trim.—How does my dainty little widow and fair Phœbe ?—I've a little matter of business for thee, if I can bring it out.

Sir Jeff. What's the matter now, Jack ?

Jack. Burst it ! I don't know what to say to it, tho' I came partly o' purpose to open a bit of my mind to thee, only other things put it out of my head.—By the way, don't let me forget to remind thee of Tom Trueby's election for Verdurer—it comes on next Tuesday—Sir Roger's folks will be there. Tom's an honest fellow, and of the right kidney ; we shall want your voice at the poll.

Sir Jeff. Here's my hand ; never flinch my friends ; I am staunch for Trueby.—Now go on with your business.

Jack. Why, I don't know how it is ; sometimes I think I am rather lonesome of an evening, when the days are short, and the roads bad, so that my neighbours can't visit me ; then the parson's dead, and there I'm out of backgammon ;—books, you know, books are but dull company ; a body is soon tir'd of reading.

Sir Jeff. Certainly ; any resource is better than that ; it gives me the hip at once.

Jack. Besides, I have had a great loss amongst my greyhounds, and so, do you see,—I sometimes think, by way of killing time, to take a wife ; that's all.

Sir Jeff. Well said, Jack ; and you have a mind to take fair Phœbe, as you call her ; 'foregad you will have wife enough, and to spare.

Jack. Yes, yes, I am aware of all that ; she's a bouncer, I confess ; but then it is mostly in winter I have occasion for such a companion ; when

fishing and shooting seasons set in I am generally from home.

Sir Jeff. She has the vengeance of a temper.

Jack. Never mind that, mine will serve for both.

Sir Jeff. Have you broke your mind to her?

Jack. No, no, that's to come yet; I shall be a little awkward and ungain at courting, but I've a recipe for that.

Sir Jeff. How so, Jack?

Jack. Why I've got a little somewhat by heart out of a book, and can say it pretty smoothly; if I can bring her to that, I shall come tolerably well off—but I hope I shall have your good word, Knight; if it is not with your liking, do you see, I am off, and no harm done.

Sir Jeff. 'Tis a small compliment to say I had rather pay her fortune to you than to a stranger, for marry she will; but as for my good word with her, I would not do you the injury to offer it—There she is in her castle; if thou hast the heart to attack it, march up boldly, the coast is clear; but if thou thinkst it better to fortify with a good dinner, and a flask of wine, friend David shall give thee a bottle of his best, and we'll have a crash, my dear boy, to set thee on thy mettle.

Jack. With all my heart, I like your counsel well; it is an old saying, "Women and wine;" but I say, Wine and women.

Sir Jeff. Come thy ways with me, then, and we will have a batch at backgammon, to while away the time till David gives the signal on the buttery-door.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

S C E N E a Chamber.

Enter Blushenly and Lady Paragon.

LADY PARAGON.

SO you've escap'd from the bottle, but there's a worse danger in wait for you: my aunt Phæbe is out of port, and has set all sails in full chace; ribands and gauzes streaming at her top, signals of distress virginity on its cruise for a consort.

Blush. Is there no looking-glass in this house that will speak a plain truth to her?

Lady P. Hellebore can't cure her: Don't you know there is nothing so foolish as the follies of genius, nothing so weak as the weaknesses of the wise?

Blush. Truly observed!—and if she will take the promissory notes of that swindler Vanity, before the solid security of honest Nature, who can help it?

Lady P. Nobody; for let Truth write ever so legibly, Love is blind, you know, and can't read it: sad confusion in the human intellects that little mischievous deity is apt to make; and when he aims an arrow at my aunt, he must be a sorry archer, if he does not hit so broad a mark.—After all, Harry, what do you mean to do? she is very rich.

Blush. And I am very poor, but that's no proof I am very mercenary.

Lady P. She has one strong feature in her favour.

Blush. Her strong box, I grant you. Your Ladyship seems to think money a tempting circumstance, and so it is in the world's opinion; but I am interested to know your real sentiments: suffer me to ask, if for a moment you can put yourself in my situation, would you marry Mrs. Phæbe Latimer?

Lady

Lady P. Humph! that's a home question, and before I answer it, I must know what your situation is.

Blush. A thing without parents, and without a name; a waif, a stray that your father has taken up upon his manor, and keeps upon the trespass till its beggarly owner perhaps shall reclaim it.

Lady P. Hold, hold, hold! you quite mistake me, you distress me;—'tis not your circumstances, Harry, but your affections, that my question points at; and sure I ought to know the state of that person's heart, for whom I am call'd upon to answer in such a case: resolve my question therefore, and I will reply to your's.

Blush. I believe we had better drop the subject.

Lady P. By no means. Am I to suppose you alike indifferent to all women? that your heart is entirely disengaged?

Blush. I beg there may be no such supposition made.

Lady P. Am I then to suppose the contrary?

Blush. Madam!

Lady P. Nay, be sincere, hide nothing from your advocate in your own cause.

Blush. I have no cause; I will not speak a falsity, and I cannot declare the truth.—Farewell. [*Going.*]

Lady P. Where's the man running?—Come back: must I take up that glove, pray, or you? (*drops her glove, which he takes up*)—Stoop, proud spirit, stoop!

Blush. I humbly ask your pardon. (*tenders her the glove.*)

Lady P. A man of gallantry wou'd have kept it.—Oh! if thou hadst half an eye, the brains but of a wren, the smallest grain of intuition in thee or about thee, thou must ere this have seen and known—

Blush. What? tell me what.

Lady P. What! all ye Powers forbid that I should tell thee what!—Go, get thee gone, thou art good for nothing but to put me out of spirits.

Blush. Turn me not away till you are reconcil'd:—instruct me, I beseech you, how I am to act with Mrs. Phoebe; for I am distress'd beyond measure.

Lady P. Well, then, if you are disposed for a piece

tice, I'll fight this quarter for my aunt, and you shall defend that for yourself.—Speak, are you ready?

Blush. No, no, no; that will never do.

Lady P. Defend yourself, for I am coming on.—We are now alone, my dear Harry; and as I know you to be the man I may confide in, I shall not scruple to avow you are the man of all the world I most approve and love: a thousand opportunities have occur'd for you to discover this, but the delicacy of your principle has determin'd you to meet my affection with indifference; I am now resolv'd to prove if that indifference be real or assum'd; the measure may seem out of character with strict propriety, but love on my part, and backwardness on yours, compel me to declare myself; and thus I offer you a fond, a faithful, a devoted heart——

Blush. Stop, stop, for pity's sake! you put me out of every thing I had to say: I tell you this will never do.

Lady P. You'll tell me of your obligations to my family; I answer, they are offices that leave us your debtors:—you'll say, you are unknown, dependent, destitute; therein you humble me, and aggrandize yourself; for with all the nobler superiorities of nature on your side, you leave me nothing but a poor advantage on the score of fortune:—as to your scruples that respect *my father*——

Blush. *Father!* you forget you are speaking for Mrs. Phœbe; you shou'd say *brother*.

Lady P. Shou'd I?—O Harry!—Let it pass however; and now for your answer.

Blush. I cannot make any answer.

Lady P. I beg your pardon, you have answer'd me, completely answer'd; I never saw rebuff more pre-emptorily given.

Blush. What do you mean? you puzzle me.

Lady P. Then practise it again, till you are perfect; and since I've got so little way on Mrs. Phœbe's side, take it yourself, and I'll reply for Mr. Blush-
only.

Blush.

Blush. Excuse me : I feel myself unfit to take up any other character than of the humblest of your servants, and with all respect entreat you to release me.

Lady P. By all means ; for, to own the truth, I am not yet prepar'd to act your part with the insensibility which it demands—Farewell ! [Exit hastily.]

Blush. O cruel, cruel honour ! [Exit.]

Enter David, introducing Major O'Flaherty, followed by two Servants in Sir Jeffry's livery.

David. Pray, Sir, walk in ; good Sir, use no ceremony : I am but a servant, under favour, yet I am bold to say every friend of Mr. Blushenly's is welcome in this house. Thomas !—William !—run about, good lads, till you can find Mr. Blushenly—tell him—but I ask your honour's pardon ; you will be pleas'd to send your own message.

O'Fl. Make no more words, but tell the young gentleman a stranger wishes to speak with him.

David. Sha'n't they carry your name, Sir ?

O'Fl. I can carry that myself ; they will be the nimbler for having nothing to burthen them with.

David. Do as you are bid then, and make haste—

[Exeunt Servants severally.]

What can his business be with Mr. Blushenly ? *(aside.)*

—I humbly conceive you have had a long journey, Sir ; won't you be pleas'd to repose yourself ?

O'Fl. With your leave, I'll stretch my legs awhile ; I have been so long in the saddle, that, except two or three tumbles and a roll by the way, I have scarce felt my feet these three days.

David. Bless me ! three days in the saddle !—Where can he be come from ? I wish I could get it out of him. *(aside.)*—I presume, Sir, you are from foreign parts—no offence, I hope.

O'Fl. None in life.

David. It will not out of my head but some good luck is to happen this day—He looks like a foreigner.

(aside.)—Are you last from Flanders, say I ?

O'Fl. Indeed you may, Sir.

David. He won't plead; what shall I do? (*aside.*)
—From the city of Lisle, perhaps?

O'Fl. Are you going thither, that you are so curious?

David. I have been there, Sir; I serv'd a Lady who is settled there, Mrs. Francis Latimer.

O'Fl. Sir!

David. Perhaps you know the lady, Sir; I believe she lives there at this day.

O'Fl. I believe not.—And now I hope you are satisfied with the information I have given you.

David. I ask pardon for my boldness, Sir; but I have known Mr. Blushenly from an infant; the first hands that receiv'd him at the door of this very house, were mine; I was in hopes you had brought news of good fortune to him; I should have sincerely rejoic'd at it, for I love him at my heart; every body loves him—but I won't be troublesome.—Here comes the young gentleman himself—

Enter Blushenly.

Blush. I am told, Sir, you would speak with me.

O'Fl. I shall be glad of that honour.—I believe our business does not want a witness; this person may retire.

Blush. David, leave the room.

David. Sir, Sir! I hope no mischief? I shall be within call. (*aside to Blush.*)

Blush. Go, go! shut the door. (*Exit David.*)
And now permit me to sequester your name, Sir?

O'Fl. O'Flaherty, at your command; you may add Major to it, if you are so pleas'd.—I have travell'd a pretty many miles, by sea and by land, out of pure love and service to you, young gentleman, if it is you that are called Mr. Blushenly.

Blush. My name is Blushenly.

O'Fl. There's your mistake, my dear; upon my faith it is not: can't you take my word at once for what I tell you?

Blush. I have been so call'd from my birth, I believe; and though neither honour nor inheritance appertains to it, I have to hope you will not take one name from me till you provide me with another.

O'Fl. You speak as prettily, and as much like a gentleman, as heart can wish.—In one word, the true name upon you is Latimer.

Blush. Latimer!

O'Fl. To be sure; did n't I tell you so at first? for if it is Latimer, look you, how can it possibly be Blushenly? Believe me at a word, and save a long preamble of a story? what grace would there be in my going through the whole catechism with you, when we can't agree upon the first question?

Blush. Tell your story then in your own way, Sir, only be pleas'd to tell it.

O'Fl. Nothing so easy; say which story you wou'd have, and I'll tell it as you like.—You had but one mother, depend upon it, and her name was Latimer, Frances Latimer, of Lisle, a lady I had the greatest respect for in life; a dear generous soul she was; a saint upon earth, though she made a small slip in her youth, and bore you over the left shoulder, as the saying is; a frolic, nothing more; but it laid upon her mind, which is wonderful to say.—Oh! she took on piteously about you in her last moments.

Blush. Good Heaven!

O'Fl. Yes, 'twas mighty good of Heaven; you'll have great cause to sing *De Deum*, when you see what a fortune she has left you.

Blush. What is this you tell me? I cannot doubt but you are serious.

O'Fl. I am not given to be a trisler, and if I were, 'twou'd be a sorry joke to take so long a journey for: I have the credentials sign'd and seal'd; you'll have 'em all before you, together with her last dying speech, and what she said afterwards in her will.—“Take these papers,” says she to me in her last moments, “take 'em, Major O'Flaherty, and deliver 'em into nobody's hands but my son's.”

Blush. And where are the papers?

O'Fl. Where are they! safe enough, trust me for that;—there's a little ragged boy at the hedge-tavern hard by, where I baited my garran, has got hold of my saddle-bags, and is bringing 'em here on his back.

Blush. Mercy upon me! had you the imprudence to trust papers of such consequence to a vagabond boy out of your sight?

O'Fl. Don't believe it, he is not out of my sight, for I ask'd him his name before I trusted him with the bags.

Blush. His name! what signifies his name?

O'Fl. Nay, if his name don't signify, 'tis all the better, for I have forgot it by the way, 'tis no longer upon my memory; but you'll know it all when the little whipster comes.

Blush. You alarm me beyond measure: let us go in search of him. (going.)

(David meets them as they are going out.)

David. There's a fellow without, who has brought some baggage belonging to this gentleman.

O'Fl. There, there! now you'll be easy; now what becomes of your alarm?

Blush. Shew me to the fellow.

David. I don't know what to make of all this.

(aside.)

(Exit.)

Jack Hustings alone,

Jack. Sir Jeffry has fled the pit, Harry Blushenly is a flincher of old, the ladies are off, the whole house is a solitude, and nothing is left for me but drowning or marrying, and they both go by destiny; therefore, if Mrs. Phoebe comes across me, I'll say a short pray, and wait my fate—A-propos!—here she is!

(Exit.)

Enter Mrs. Phoebe Latimer.

Mrs. Phoebe, your most humble servant; I think myself fortunate in this meeting.

Phoebe. Really! then I conclude, Mr. Hustings, you are no friend to contemplation, and do not like your own company: now I am, as the Ancients express it, never less alone than when alone.—Could you not pass an hour with a book? the library is open?

Jack. With a book! yes, Madam, I can take up a book, when I've nothing else to do.

Phoebe. And what books do you chiefly read, pray?—poetry, history, philosophy?

Jack. All's one for that; the Racing Calendar, Cock-fighter's Guide, Complete Angler, and the rest of the classes; nothing comes amiss.—Are you fond of fishing, Mrs. Phoebe.

Phoebe. In theory extremely so; I can fish with Sannazarius all the day long.

Jack. He's a happy man truly; but I cannot say I know the gentleman; does he troll, pray now, or fish with a fly?

Phoebe. I rather believe with a quill; Sannazarius was a poet of the fifteenth century.

Jack. And that's a wonderful old age for a poet; but fishing's a long-liv'd amusement.

Phoebe. 'Tis a solitary one.

Jack. You've hit it, Mrs. Phoebe, 'tis a solitary one; and to say the truth, I begin to find I must seek out a companion to cheer my solitude, a companion for life, Mrs. Phoebe.

Phoebe. Oh dear heart, if you are in quest of a wife, pass on; don't let me stop you; you have no time to lose.

Jack. Perhaps I shall go no further—I have a Lady in my thoughts; not one of your flanting young Madams, but a staid, sensible, discreet person, of a suitable age.—I don't chuse by the eye, Mrs. Phoebe; I

ask for no more than I bring: youth and beauty are not indispensables in my choice.

Phœbe. If you are contented without them, you are the sooner pleas'd.—And who may the happy lady be, whom you have so flatteringly described?

Jack. One you know very well, Mrs. Phœbe; she's not far off.

Phœbe. One of our neighbours?

Jack. One of your family, the sister of my friend, Sir Jeffry; if you know the lady's mind, I shall be glad you will inform me of it.

Phœbe. Her mind I know sure enough, but her person I should not have guess'd at by your description of it.—I believe I may answer for that lady, that such addresses, which convey an affront, or any addresses from you, Mr. Hustings, will meet nothing but repulse.

Jack. That's very extraordinary; for Sir Jeffry told me you was determin'd upon marrying out of hand.

Phœbe. Did he so?

Jack. Yes he did; "Marry she will," says he "and to be sure I had rather pay her fortune to you than to a stranger:" these were his very words.

Phœbe. Defile not my ears with the vulgar retail of his impertinent discourse. Sir Jeffry shall repent of this insult.

Jack. Now, if I could but fetch her up with the speech; but, as I'm a true man, she has frighten'd it out of my head.—Come, come, sweet Mrs. Phœbe, don't be angry with me; you and I have long been friends—Fair bud of beauty! look upon your enamour'd lover; suffer him to enfold you in his arms, to clasp you to his panting heart!

Phœbe. Keep off! avoid the chamber!—

Jack. One kiss, one kind, consenting, reconciling kiss!—

[Offers to kiss her.]

Phœbe. Off, monster!—Are we amongst woods and wilds, with satyrs, or in a civiliz'd society, with men?—Here is no scene for Lapithean banquets, thou

descendant

descendant of the Centaurs! The ancient Scythians were not more barbarous in their cups than thou art; Rome's monarchy was lost by violence not more shocking than this.

Enter Lady Paragon.

Lady P. Bless me, aunt Phoebe, what's the matter?

Phoebe. Matter enough; this savage would have forc'd a kiss upon me.

Jack. Why then, as I hope to be sav'd, I did it for the best.

Lady P. Do you call that your best? O fie!—Men are strange animals, and when we women throw out our charms and look alluring, which you, dear aunt, particularly do this moment, such little fracas will happen. Come, let me intercede; 'twas but a kiss at most, and I never think a kiss worth fighting for.

Phoebe. Nor I, perhaps in any other case; but he had the ill-manners to introduce a proposal of marriage, by telling me he did not look for youth or beauty in a wife.

Lady P. That's the consequence of having too many good qualities.—Had you nothing but youth and beauty to recommend you, you had been sure to have heard of them: foolish women always get the finest things said to them.—Go your way; take no leave of her, but begone. [*Aside to Jack Hustings.*]

Jack. Thou art a dear soul: there's more fufs with these old maids than they are worth.

[*Exit Jack Hustings.*]

Lady P. Well, my dear aunt, how do you find yourself now?

Phoebe. Something better; but still in a terrible flutter: my heart beats vehemently.

Lady P. Oh yes, these men do set our hearts a beating; but you see he is gone, the ravisher is gone; I hope you will recover by degrees—I'll stay by you till you are safe: if he should come back I can scream out whilst you are defending yourself; for, let the

worst come to the worst, he can stop the mouth but of one of us at a time.

Phæbe. In my days lovers were on their knees to their ladies for the favour of a salute; and the concession of the cheek was not then to be obtain'd without long solicitation, tears, and entreaties.

Lady P. These were fine days indeed; then a lady set her favours at some price: now so many give away their goods for nothing, that they have fairly spoil'd the market. If Mr. Blushenly now—

Phæbe. You do him wrong; in all our intercourse he never once solicited—

Lady P. Oh fie! take care of what you say: remember, remember!

Phæbe. What shou'd I remember?

Lady P. The tapestry bed-chamber, when you was shewing him king Solomon and his concubines in chain-stitch. Defend me from these modest men! your beef-fed country squires are nothing to them; they have the will, indeed, but not the wit, to be mischievous.

Phæbe. Well, well, I shan't easily be persuaded out of my good opinion of Mr. Blushenly.

Lady P. Keep to that, and you are safe; good opinion is one thing, and love is another.

Phæbe. True; yet in some cases they go together.

Lady P. And then they drive at a furious rate truly: when Love holds the whip, Reason drops the reins.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T ' III.

SCENE *a Hunting Hall.*

Sir Jeffry Latimer, Blushenly, and O'Flaherty.

A table with papers.

SIR JEFFRY.

J OY to you, my dear Harry, all joy attend you ! The will's a good will ; you have a brave property ; your title's firm, pen and parchment can't make a better. I am beside myself with joy ; I'll have a jubilee for this month to come ; there shan't be a sober man in the county. I cou'd laugh and cry, and be merry and be sad, or any thing but in my senses.—Come into my arms, my dear, dear Mr. what's your name !

O'Fl. Dennis O'Flaherty is my name. I hope you like it ; it has been a pretty while in the family, and I shou'd be loth to change it.

Sir Jeff. I shall love your name and your nation as long as I have breath. Why, a man of your parts might have married this cousin of mine, and snapp'd her whole fortune, if you had not been the noblest fellow upon earth.

O'Fl. Where's the nobleness of not being a rascal ? I prize the friendship of the fair sex too well to raise money upon them. It was my fortune in life to inherit nothing at all ; and I have not lessen'd it ; my good name and my good sword are still my own, and there is no incumbrance upon either ; I have not mortgag'd them to dishonour, and, with the grace of Heaven, I never intend it.

Blush. Mr. O'Flaherty, I wou'd fain thank you : but my heart is too full ; time and my future conduct

must declare my gratitude: whatever may be my good fortune, you, under Providence, are the father of it.

O'Fl. It has been my lot young gentleman, to meet a great deal of good fortune in the world—belonging to other people, I mean—and 'tis a mighty pleasant thing to carry up and down, tho' I have never kept any to my own share.

Sir Jeff. Ah, my good friend, 'tis well my cousin Frances fell into honest hands; she was a tempting trust in a distant country.

O'Fl. What difference does the distance make in my honesty, or her trust? Not but I must own some of your countrymen, who have had their tempting trusts at a distance, have remember'd to leave the trust behind 'em, and bring home nothing but the temptation.

Sir Jeff. That's true, that's true. Oh! that you had heard what a speech I had like to have made one day in parliament on this very subject—"Mr. Speaker," says I, starting on my legs, "shall I tamely sit down?—shall I sit down tamely, Mr. Speaker?" Wou'd you think it?—passion choak'd me, and I did sit down.

O'Fl. What a pity's that, when a man has got a full bottle, and can't pluck out the cork!—I'll tell you what, Sir Jeffry, you need not be surpriz'd at finding a poor Catholic like myself an honest man; you take a ready way to keep us so, by shutting us out of your service.

Sir Jeff. And now, Harry, that you are of the house of the Latimers, if it drops in your hands I am clear of the blame.

O'Fl. O' my conscience, that's well thought of; if there's a gap in your pedigree, old gentleman, you had better trust to him for filling it up than yourself; aye, and let me tell you, you are not a little beholden to the poor dear soul that's dead for putting a streak in your ladder, when you was on the last step of it: marry! but she made a good

job of it, tho' she had only her left hand to work with.

Blush. Touch not upon that subject ! I am to mourn a mother, who, till the last hour of her life, never acknowledg'd me ; I must remember her, therefore, as a benefactress rather than a parent.— You, Sir, have ever been a father to me.

Sir Jeff. Take my daughter into council then, and be a son to me. You see the conditions of your mother's bequest ; unless you marry Lady Paragon you have only a life-holding in your estate : Frances, with all her failings, had a family-feeling for the house of Latimer.

Blush. 'Tis that condition, with other reasons of equal delicacy, makes me entreat you both to keep this matter secret, till I have founded the affections of your adorable daughter. I wou'd owe my happiness to nothing but her free choice and bounty—I beseech you, therefore, to conceal this event, for a few hours at least, from Lady Paragon, from Mrs. Phœbe, and in short, from all your family, but honest David ; his friendly anxiety must be reliev'd. You will promise me this, Sir Jeffry ?

Sir Jeff. Twenty long years and upwards have I brooded upon this nest-egg, and now the chicken's hatcht I mayn't cackle ;—'tis a little hard, but I'll do as you bid me.

Blush. Major O'Flaherty, I may expect the same from you ?

O'Fl. To be sure you may, my dear :—amuse yourself in your own way, ride your own roundabout, so you do but come to the right point at last.

Sir Jeff. Come, Harry, this business being dispatched, let us now go and tap the best bottle in my cellar to the health of this worthy gentleman, to whose good offices we are both so highly indebted.

O'Fl. For the bottle Sir Jeffry, I am your man ; for the good offices you speak of, speak no more

about 'em; honesty is due to every man, and how should you be indebted to me for what I owe you?

Sir Jeff. Come, Sir, let me shew you the way—
(*Going.*)

O'Fl. Mr. Latimer, with your leave I shall be following you.

Blush. By no means—I am at home;—but not Latimer, if you please, call me Blushenly.

O'Fl. Aye, aye, that's true—Blushenly—now you go by your wrong name; that's right!—Well, well! let me see. I call'd you by your right name, but that's wrong—By my soul, between both but it's a very puzzling affair.

Enter Jack Hustings.

Sir Jeff. Hold, hold, hold! as I live, a very admirable recruit to our party.—Mr. Hustings, this is Major O'Flaherty; Major O'Flaherty, this is my friend, Mr. Hustings.—I pray you be known to each other, Gentlemen both! honest men don't meet every day.

Blush. This is my moment to escape.

[*Exit hastily.*]

O'Fl. I am proud to know you, Sir; you bear your credentials about you; there's a passport in your countenance that will carry you through every kingdom in Europe.—Sir Jeffry Latimer, your friend here looks as if he could say *Boh!* to a bottle as well as most men.

Sir Jeff. I'll be his sponsor, though it were in the dark.—And now, friend Jack, shall we drink to the health of fair Phœbe, your future bride?

Jack. Hush, hush! if you love me; no more of that, Knight: let the wind whistle as it may, if every month in the twelve was November, I'll tuck myself up with a halter, before I'll couple with a wife.

Sir

Sir Jeff. Are you so soon dishearten'd?—never fear, man; you and fair Phœbe will make it up before night.

Jack. Then I'll give my skin to the tanner before morning, for you'll find it on the beam;—why she flouted me in a stile as proud as Nebuchadnezzar.

Sir Jeff. And she will be as humble as a trout before this day passes over her head, or I'll never venture at prediction again: retain this gentleman in your cause, and I'll ensure a verdict in your favour.

O'Fl. Is there any quarrel a-foot? What is the matter, may I ask?

Sir Jeff. A lady's matter; a small suit at matrimony between this worthy gentleman and a maiden sister of mine, *Mrs. Phœbe Latimer*: the good lady, it must be own'd, is rather on the down-hill passage towards the vale of years, and has cast the eyes of her affection on the young gentleman we just now parted with.

O'Fl. When one is going down the hill and t'other up, nothing so natural as that both shou'd meet; but, my life upon it, *Mr. Latimer* will give her the go-by.

Sir Jeff. Mr. Blushenly, you wou'd say.

O'Fl. Well remember'd; you put that leaf into my book in good time.

Enter David.

Sir Jeff. Now, *David*, what's the news with you?

David. Strange news, Sir, *Mr. Ruefull* is coming to visit you.

Sir Jeff. *Ruefull* to visit me! I want faith to believe you.

David. His servant is in the house; and if you like to see a curiosity, Gentlemen, you will order him in.

Jack. Oh, bring him in by all means, *David*; I should

should like to see the running-footman to a tortoise. Who is dead in your house, Knight, that old Ruefull is come to sit up by the corpse?

[Exit David,

O'Fl. Ruefull! Ruefull! sure I've heard that name before.

Jack. When a miser or a man-hater is mention'd, Ruefull's name is in every body's mouth.

Sir Jeff. 'Tis a rough shell, but there's virtue at the heart of him,—But I see the fellow coming—Get yourselves ready, Gentlemen, for Death is at the door.

Dumps is brought in by David.

O'Fl. (*Seeing Dumps as he enters.*) Oh the Beelzebub! what's here?—Which of the seven deadly sins begot you? what gibbet have you defrauded of its furniture?

Dumps. I am serving-man to Squire Ruefull; I hasten'd in advance, to signify the coming on of my master.—*Salve Domine!—Et tu quoque!—Pax in domo!*

O'Fl. What the plague! which of your evil tongues is that?

Dumps. 'Tis Latin; I learnt it when I shew'd the tombs in Westminster-Abbey.

O'Fl. Oho! if you come out of the tombs, 'tis no wonder you speak the dead languages.

Dumps. *Reste,*

Sir Jeff. When will your master be here, fellow?

Dumps. Anon.

Sir Jeff. Hark ye, David, take this mummy into the cellar, and wet his dust with a cup of October. You'll find better company in my vaults, friend, than the-Abbey's.

Dumps. Oh dear, Sir, I was reasonable merry, till I came into my master's service; he is a monument of a man: we should have had a terrible journey of it, if we had not luckily fallen in with a black job by the way, and kept company with the corpse to Exeter Cathedral.

Jack. I must be acquainted with this fellow.—
What is your name ?

Dumps. My name is Dumps, an' please you.

Jack. How long have you been in Mr. Ruefull's service ?

Dumps. Five years by the calendar, five centuries by calculation.—I had indeed the choice of being keeper of a pest-house, but I was fool enough to withstand the offer ; and, all other trades failing, took into my present service.

O'Fl. What other trades have you followed ? let us know your history.

Dumps. 'Tis soon told, Gentlemen :—I am the son of a sexton, and work'd at my father's business in my youth ; I then went into the service of a dissecting surgeon, and with my father's help furnished my master's academy with subjects.

O'Fl. Oh Lord have mercy upon us !

Dumps. When that trade fail'd, I hir'd myself out to the Humane Society.

O'Fl. That was the devil of a jump backwards.

Dumps. Many an honest gentleman now walks about with breath of my blowing ;—but it was too much labour for one pair of lungs ; and, by giving life to a drowned Alderman upon a swan-hopping party, I contracted a consumption, and turn'd murder-monger to a morning paper.

O'Fl. Murder-monger ! there you are in your old quarters once more.—And what's murder-monger, I would fain ask ?

Dumps. Casualty-compiler, an' please you, inventor of murders to amuse our customers ; but they said I wanted variety in my violent deaths, I made too much use of the brewer's dray ; so they took a tragic poet in my place, and I was turn'd into Westminster Abbey, as a valet-de-chambre to the ragged regiment, to brush the dust off the faces of the wax-work ; from thence I came into Squire Ruefull's service ; and if I take another step downwards, it must be to the old one, for I can go no lower in this world.

Sir Jeff. Try the depth of my cellar first, and then we'll talk further with you : get you gone.—
[*Exit Dumps.*]

But I see the Ladies coming—let us step aside, my good friend, and concert our evidence, and then we shall agree in the same story.

O'Fl. Faith, and that's well thought of ; for if the truth is not to be spoken, 'tis mighty proper to agree what we shall put in the place of it.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Phoebe, Lady Paragon, and Blushenly.

Phæbe. Mr. Blushenly, who is that stranger with my brother ?

Blush. His name is O'Flaherty, an officer in the Austrian service.

Phæbe. But what is his business here ?

Blush. He comes to announce the death of your relation, Mrs. Frances Latimer.

Phæbe. What do you tell me ? Is she dead ? this is news indeed :—do you hear this, Lady Paragon ? The death of Mrs. Latimer is an event very interesting to us all.

Lady P. As I had scarce the honour of knowing the lady, I cannot say I am particularly affected by the event : if any good person is made happy by her fortune, so far I shall be rejoic'd at it.

Phæbe. Why, your father is her heir at law : I wonder you can be so insensible.

Lady P. I hope my father has enough without it ; there are people in the world I shou'd rather wish her fortune to.—I recollect, Harry, she was once very good to you, what shall I give you for your legacy ?

Blush. I will not sell it, because I have never yet had any good luck to dispose of ;—but, promise that you will share it with me, and, believe me, in that case I will find the old proverb true, and half will be much more than the whole.

Lady P. 'Tis done ! I agree to it, so the parti-

Enter Sir Jeffery Latimer and O'Flaherty.

Sir Jeff. Where are the ladies? I've a budget of news for them.—Sister Phoebe, this is Major O'Flaherty, a friend of our cousin, Mrs. Frances Latimer; I believe his name is not unknown to you.—Major, this is my daughter, Lady Paragon.

[O'Flaherty bows to the Ladies severally.]

O'Fl. A Paragon indeed!—I am sorry I must put you in mourning, Ladies, and strike these fine colours, that become you so well; I bring you news of the death of a relation.

Phæbe. I understand my cousin Frances is dead.

O'Fl. She is all that, Madam, the more's the pity.

Phæbe. Pity indeed! I fear she was not very fit to die; I hope she had time to repent.

O'Fl. Plenty of time—and to make her will too.

Ph. In that I suppose you have an interest, Sir.

O'Fl. Oh! a very great one; I have the pleasure to see every shilling bequeath'd to her own son.

Phæbe. Her son! her own son! Oh! monstrous!

O'Fl. Where's the monstrous part of it? She wou'd have been a monster if she had not done it.

Lady P. Do you hear that, Blushenly?—our bargain is drawn.

Blush. I beg your pardon, I shall hold you to it.

Phæbe. I never heard she had a son: where is he? what is he?—She was a single woman, how cou'd she have a son?

O'Fl. I believe there was a very natural reason for it; she was not a single woman in that particular, I take it.

Sir Jeff. Buzzle yourself with no more questions; the world says, this son of my cousin's merits his good fortune; you will see him in this house; he is near at hand, and only waits to know if it will be agreeable he should present himself.—Lady Paragon, I hope you have no objection to a visit from him.

Lady P. How can I Sir? an agreeable visitor will always be an accession to our family circle.

Sir Jeff. You will be very fond of him, when you know him.

Lady P. No doubt I shall, and before I know him, by your character of him.

Sir Jeff. Have a care of yourself, Louisa; for if you should fall desperately in love, and throw yourself away upon the best young man in England, you will go near to break my heart—with joy.

Lady P. The Heavens forbid! I would not be guilty of such a thing for the world.

Sir Jeff. 'Tis no matter, in spite of all my warning you will do it.

Lady P. Impossible!

Sir Jeff. I tell you you will do it;—sister Phœbe, remember I predict it.

Phœbe. Stay till the event happens, brother Jeffery, and then you may safely risque a prediction.

Sir Jeff. What do you say in the case, Major O'Flaherty, are you with me in opinion?

O'Fl. Oh! most clearly; and the more her Ladyship protests against it; give me leave to say, the more I am persuaded of it.

Lady P. That's severe indeed, if Ladies are to be taken by contraries.

O'Fl. Ladies like you, Madam, must be taken as we can get them; such prizes don't fall to every man's lot: if Sir Jeffery has a mind for a wager, I shall be very glad to go sharer with him.

Lady P. Agreed! what shall the wager be?

O'Fl. Any thing but money.

Lady P. I'll put my life upon the stake.

O'Fl. Any thing but murder; for your money I don't value it; and for your life, it is in my opinion above all value.

Lady P. Name your own terms then; the bet is lost before 'tis laid.

O'Fl. Let it be a wedding-favour then: a cockade to mount in our hats, and a courtesy to wear upon our lips.—Will you strike hands to this?

Lady P. Hands and heart—Blushenly shall hold stakes.

Blush. Give them to me, then, and let me seal the treasure thus, and thus (*kisses her hand*).—When I forfeit this deposit, it must be death that takes it from me.

Sir Jeff. All this does not stagger me: I tell you, daughter, you have laid a losing wager, and so good b'ye to you.—Come, Gentlemen. [*Exit.*]

O'Fl. I am your Ladyship's most obedient—I shall call upon you for payment; 'tis true I have only half a share, but any half of your Ladyship's favours is more by half than any man deserves. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter David and Dumps.

David. Well, Master Dumps, how do you find yourself now?

Dumps. Gayly.

David. How sits Honour's old October on your stomach?

Dumps. Bravely.

David. Now you are free of Merryfield Hall: every body that comes here goes thro' a wetting.

Dumps. Bene.

David. 'Tis the custom of the house.

Lumps. Floreat.!

Enter Servant, and speaks to Dumps.

Serv. Are not you servant to the Gentleman just arriv'd?

Dumps. Who? Old Ruefull?

Serv. I don't know his name; but if your's be Dumps, he is calling out lustily for you in the hall.—Run, and see what he wants; for he won't be pacify'd without you.

Dumps. I run! no, if I cou'd have done that, I wou'd have run out of his service long enough ago.—Hang him, earthworm, let him crawl to me, I'll not budge.

David. Hush, hush! keep a good tongue in your head, Dumps; here your master comes.

[*Exeunt David and Servant.*]

Dumps retires to the back scene. Enter Ruefull.

Ruefull. Are they fools born, or fools bewicht, in this house? 'Twere better I took lodgings in a belfry, and slept in the ringing of bob-majors, than harbour in this academy of confusion—Here have I been calling for my rascal, and every rascal runs but the right one; half a score tongues to answer, not a hand to help: the building of Babel was a Quaker's meeting to it.—Where is this fellow of mine? 'tis plain he has not broken his neck, else I shou'd have stumbled upon his corpse. Dumps! why Dumps, I say!

Dumps. Here am I.

Ruefull. Here am I! hedge-hog:—well, and here I am. Why don't you move at my call? Are you in the stocks? Are you in the conjurer's circle?

Dumps. Very likely, for my head runs round.

Ruefull. Why, you are tipsy; you have been drinking, firrah: your eyes are set in your head.

Dumps. I hope so.

Ruefull. Sot, didn't I warn you against this? How often have I preach'd to you on the virtue of sobriety?

Dumps. Yes, but you made a virtue of necessity; you never gave me a chance to get tipsy in your service.

Ruefull. And I'll take care you never shall again, firrah. I'll muzzle you for this: I'll shut you up in the Eddystone, upon rotten biscuit and rain-water, for a twelvemonth.

Dumps. Do; then I shall go out of the world in a blaze.—*Vale.* [Exit.

Enter Sir Jeffery.

Sir Jeff. What old acquaintance! are you come amongst us? Welcome to Merryfield Hall; stay with me an hour, or stay with me a month, once

Ruefull. I am oblig'd to you : it becomes the master of the mansion to welcome his guests : but when his servants do the office for him, they are apt to overact their parts. Your fellows have intoxicated my fool with their western hospitality ; and I am as much to seek, without him, as a blind beggar without his dog.—I pray you get somebody to lead me about the house.

Sir Jeff. I will be your servant ; every body will be your servant.

Ruefull. Let it be some civil gentleman then, and none of those powder'd coxcombs I met in your lobby. Servants now-a-days dress so like gentlemen, and gentlemen so like servants, that the less ceremony is with the better sort : if Harry Blushenley is with you, turn me over to him.

Sir Jeff. He'll be happy to attend upon you ; I expect him every moment.

Ruefull. I have a foolish liking to the lad—but no matter.—Hark ye, friend Jeffery ; if you foist me into one of your state-beds, with a villainous Dutch device of fair Bathsheba, or the queen of Sheba, to keep me company, I had rather you shou'd shut me into your old tower, with a screech-owl at my casement, and a death-watch at my tester. If you make a stranger of me that way, you'll be sure to keep me so.

Sir Jeff. 'Fore George, you've hit it : the chamber in the old tower will suit you to a truth—But hold, hold ! that won't do, neither—if you ring your bell there, not a soul will come to it, was it to save your life or their own.

Ruefull. What's the matter with it ?

Sir Jeff. 'Tis haunted : Tom Dismal walks there.

Ruefull. I knew him when I was a boy ; he was your father's butler : a melancholy man he was ; he taught me the history of the great plague, and the fire of London.

Sir Jeff. He tuck'd himself up on the beam, in the great frost thirty-nine.

Ruefull. He could not do it in a cooler moment.
—But look! here comes your young man;—go to your company, and leave us together.

Sir Jeff. You shall have your humour; so good b'ye to you. [Exit.

Enter Blushenly.

Blush. I am happy to see you, Sir; I hope you are in good health.

Ruefull. No, no, child, no such thing: I am never in good health: throw away no time in such silly compliments. Shut the door, for your owls in this house are broad awake in noon-day.—So, so! that's well.—I have taken an idle whim in my head, youngster, since you was at the Hermitage, that I am rather ashamed of, and therefore, do you see, I chose to make all fast before I come to confession.

Blush. I believe, Sir, nobody can overhear us, if you have any commands in private for me.

Ruefull. Wasn't it three days you pass'd at my cottage?

Blush. I think it was, Sir.

Ruefull. I dare say you thought 'em thirteen; but you play'd the hypocrite well.

Blush. Oh for shame, Sir! you must believe to the contrary, or think me the most ungrateful of all men.

Ruefull. No, no, no, no. I tell you I don't think it.—I have an odd humour of my own, I know I have; but I like you, I have a regard for you, young man; and that's more than I have said to any body these thirty years;—I suppose, if I was better acquainted with you, I shou'd be cur'd of my weakness.

Blush. Perhaps you wou'd Sir; for I'll not boast of my own deservings.

Ruefull. I like you the better for it, I like you the better for it. I hate professions; I am sick when I meet a fellow bolster'd up with bladders, pufft full of his own empty praises. I hope you don't think I am fool enough to come here upon a visit to old Jeffer-

ry—Not I, nor to Dame Pratlet, his cackling sister, either. He has got his daughter home, has he not?

Blush. Yes, Sir, Lady Paragon is part of the family.

Ruefull. A blockhead that he was, to marry her to a gamester. He deserves to be hung up by the heels, with a warning pasted on the gibbet to all fathers, mothers, and guardjans. Why didn't he give her to you?

Blush. Alas! Sir, I had neither father, mother, nor fortune.

Ruefull. What then? you had a better pedigree without parents, than she has with them; and for fortune, what's that; if you was of my way of thinking, you would not take it was it offer'd to you: why I have got a fortune, youngster, a great fortune, if that be all, and a great house; but *Magna domus magnum malum* is my motto; a hut by the sea-side is the castle of my comfort.—I have something to say to you on the subject of this young woman; but first let me have a sight of her.

Blush. She is now taking her walk in the garden; shall we join her?

Ruefull. With all my heart—shew me the way.
[*Exeunt.*]

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

MRS. PHOEBE LATIMER *alone.*

IF this silly brother of mine was not the strangest compound of contraries in nature, I shou'd think there was some plot in his proceeding; for it seems, as if he encourag'd Blushenly, whilst he was recommending Latimer; yet he protests to me his heart is set upon the match: but you may as well teach method to a monkey, as expect consistency in him.—Well met, Sir! I must beg your patient answer to a few questions.

Enter Blushenly.

Blush. Propose them.

Phoebe. What are you doing in this family, Mr. Blushenly? are you, or are you not, apprisd of my brother's wishes for the disposal of his daughter to the heir of my cousin Latimer?

Blush. I am, Madam.

Phoebe. Are you dispos'd to promote, or to obstruct that alliance?

Blush. Warmly to promote it.

Phoebe. Then you take a very extraordinary method of doing it, let me tell you:—I can hardly believe Lady Paragon will be the more dispos'd to give her hand to Mr. Latimer, for the ardor with which Mr. Blushenly kisses it.

Blush. She has hamper'd me; but I cannot disclose myself to her yet. *(aside.)*

Phoebe. I perceive you are embarrass'd.—Female hearts, young Gentleman, cannot resist such gallantries; there is nothing else wanting in your character to render you irresistible.—You must not kiss her hand again, indeed you must not.

Blush. If it was done to recommend Mr. Blushenly, and not Mr. Latimer, set me down in your opinion for the meanest of mankind.

Phæbe. Whom but yourself can it recommend? Nature is your advocate, Mr. Blushenly; she wants no help: she has bestow'd upon you attractions more than enough; no one is secure within the sphere of their activity; I speak upon conviction:—Oh! had you so dealt by me! but you are alter'd, you are estrang'd from me; you treat me disdainfully, Mr. Blushenly.

Blush. For which of my sins am I to be thus tormented? (*aside.*)—How so, I beseech you? when have I been thus guilty?

Phæbe. When!—Have you forgot then how, in spite of all I could devise to stop you, you run to the coquettish lure of Lady Paragon; like a quail to the call, whilst the net was spreading to entrap you?

Blush. Well, Madam, perhaps I cannot defend every little inattention to prudence;—you must take me on the tenor of my life; and I trust it will never happen to me to be found wanting in esteem for you: as to Lady Paragon, be assur'd, I will never oppose the presumptuous addresses of a foundling, to the just pretensions of a man of fortune.

Phæbe. You judge wisely, Mr. Blushenly; I commend your resolution;—she is not fit to be a wife.

Blush. She is not fit to be a wife to a Blushenly I confess to you: when that name comes into union with a Latimer, it will not be with Lady Paragon, depend upon it.

Phæbe. Now, now indeed I understand you;—that was kindly said; that was like yourself: you have reliev'd an anxious throbbing heart.—Oh Mr. Blushenly, you must not kiss her hand again—Indeed I cannot bear it.—

Blush. Be content! every thing shall be clear'd up before this day is at an end—at present, I must

take my leave; but an hour shan't pass before I will see you again.

Phæbe. Indeed! shall we meet so soon again?

Blush. Without fail—Then I will hold back nothing from you.

Phæbe. Nor I from you; till then farewell! (*Exit Blush.*)—'Tis done! 'tis settled! that important matter is at last adjusted. As for their jeers and jibes, I value them not. I'll draw my fortune into my own hands.—Let me see! Twenty thousand, at five per cent.—a neat income in a cheap country; a retir'd little box, with a spare room for a nursery; a post-chaise for myself, and a nag for my husband—Why, 'tis affluence; 'tis luxury; 'tis the paradise of human life!—Pshaw! this fellow again!

Enter Jack Hustings.

Jack. Don't be frighten'd, Mrs. Phæbe! you have nothing to fear: I have seen my error, and thoroughly repent of it.

Phæbe. 'Tis well you have, Sir.

Jack. Very true, 'tis a happy reformation—but who can command himself at all times, Mrs. Phæbe? Where's the man that can do it? I was surpriz'd, taken unawares, passion ran away with me like an unbroke horse: but I have got him under now; I can govern him with a twine of thread.

Phæbe. 'Tis well you can, Sir.

Jack. Very true, Mrs. Phæbe, 'tis a joyful change.—I see I am not the man; a lady of your talents can't take up with a country 'squire; 'tis not to be thought of—Blushenly carries all before him.

Phæbe. Where did your sagacity collect that, Mr. Hustings?

Jack. 'Tis not I only that see it; all the neighbours talk of nothing else. I thought indeed disparity of years might have stood in his way; but I see you do not start at trifles, your generosity has surmounted that objection: as for fortune, I know you have a spirit above that.

Phæbe.

Phœbe. Whether you know it or not, I have that spirit, Sir.

Jack. Yes, Mrs. Phœbe, I am ready to bear witness to your spirit ; and tho' a discarded lover, have some hopes, by the blessing of a good constitution to survive it, and dance at your wedding still.—Happy be the man ! he has the merit of admiring you for your youth and beauty—I had the misfortune to address you for your virtue and discretion.

Enter Sir Jeffery Latimer, Ruefull, and Lady Paragon.

Sir Jeff. Sister Phœbe, here is an old friend and servant of your's, Mr. Ruefull ; he is not quite so jovial as Jack Hustings, nor so young as Harry Blushenly ; but, if you like a melancholy lover, I'll pit my friend against all England.

Ruefull. Ah, Mrs. Phœbe ! a pretty many years have gone over our heads since I handed you to your berlin from the opera of Grifelda. I was then a young man just come home from my travels, and you a fine gay girl in your bloom, just setting out on your career of conquests.—By the same token, I remember I broke a glass hoop-ring, which it was then a fashion to wear, into your finger by squeezing your hand ; I shall never forget the pretty flutter it threw you into, when the blood started thro' your glove : I penn'd a sonnet on the occasion, in elegiac metre, that had some points in it ; but it did not move ; you was ever inexorable.

Phœbe. Such a thing may have pass'd, but I was too young to carry the impression in remembrance.

Ruefull. Very likely, for I dare say your wound heal'd quicker than mine. I retir'd from the gay world soon after, where I had no desire to pass for a splenetic companion amongst men of pleasure ; since when I have made some friendships with the dead, merely that we may not be absolute strangers to each other when we meet ; however I have this advantage in it, that I am going to my connecti-

ons, and you are parting from your's. Not that I would be understood to insinuate that you have any symptoms of immediate decay about you, Mrs. Phœbe; on the contrary, I think your air and apparel more gay and juvenile than I should have look'd for in a person of your years; and I rejoice to see you carry them off so much above my expectation.—Truly you are a fine woman of your age, a very fine woman of your age still.

[*Mrs. Phœbe walks aside in a passion.*]

Jack. Wormwood, Knight, wormwood! She is broiling with vexation.

Sir Jeff. Hark ye, daughter Paragon, cut her lace, and save her stays from bursting.

Lady P. Worse and worse! Here's Blushenly coming; I cannot bear to see her suffer.—Mr. Ruefull, I should grow jealous, if you make all these fine speeches to my aunt, and not let me have my turn.—Go to my aunt, Harry, go; I can assure you she has her full share of admiration in this company, and you are throwing weight into the heavier scale.—Why don't you do as I bid you?

(*Apart to Blushenly.*)

[*Blushenly having entered during this speech of Lady Paragon's, she makes signs to him to go to Mrs. Phœbe; which he at first misunderstands, but afterwards goes and converses apart with her.*]

Ruefull. There is something very sincere in your challenge, young Lady, I like the manner of it well; and, to tell you the truth, I came hither purposely to see you; for tho' I am an old fellow with one foot in my coffin, I hope there's no harm if I take a parting peep at youth and beauty before death shuts down the lid. I was curious, you must know, to see you with my own eyes, and hear with my own ears; for had I taken what that idle young fellow there reported upon trust, I shou'd have the strangest opinion of you in nature.

Lady P. How so, I pray, how so? I should expect he, of all men, would report of me as a friend.

Ruefull

Ruefull. I should doubt that, for he made you out to be a miracle of human goodness—Now that's a shot point-blank against all my experience and belief.

Phæbe. Oh! that I had that man's tongue in my pocket!—will nobody silence him!

Lady P. You are justified in your incredulity; for I shall not scruple to confess, that I am more proud of his partiality, than I cou'd be of the truth itself.

Ruef. That's a fair confession, at least; and if it does not serve to convey a very favourable impression of your judgment, it enables me to guess at your affections towards the young man at your elbow; and I am persuaded I shall have my old friend Mrs. Phoebe on my side, if I wish you both happy in each other.

Phæbe. Are you so, Sir? are you so? Why do you take upon yourself to answer for me in the case?

Rue. Because I think you have liv'd long enough in the world to see the miseries of unequal matches:—where affections meet, where characters tally, where tempers agree, who regards fortune?

Jack. Not Mrs. Phoebe, I assure you; she has a spirit above that—you know you told me so yourself, just now.

Phæbe. Who desir'd you to interfere?

Rue. Then their ages, Madam—there, I'm sure, you'll own they're match'd. Now I hold it in abhorrence, and equally a sin against nature in either sex, were an old fellow like myself to couple his infirmities to the youth and beauty of Lady Paragon, or a woman of your gravity to besool herself with a ridiculous passion for him there.

Jack. Lack-aday, Sir! Mrs. Phoebe can get over that too.

Phæbe. Who told you what I can get over, or what I cannot get over? I desire I may neither be quoted for an example, nor referr'd to as a witness in these matters—And you must give me leave to tell you, Mr. Ruefull, that it is unusual for strangers like you to interfere in family mat-

ters, and take up the concerns of other people's alliances, as if they were their own.

Ruefull. Whether I am officious or not, Madam, time must shew; but I trust there is no offence in saying, that if this young Lady was my daughter, I would bestow her on Mr. Blushenly, or was he my son, I would recommend him to Lady Paragon: this is my opinion, Mrs. Phœbe, and I am ready to back it with my purse, if it is wanted. I believe I have as good an estate as my old friend here, perhaps I might say a better, for I have nursed it pretty carefully, and liv'd upon the gnawing of a crust; —'twas my humour, and I had nobody's leave to ask for mortifying myself. I am going out of the world, this young man is coming into it.—If Sir Jeffery will step aside with me, perhaps I shall convince him at least that I did not come here officiously, and for nothing. [*Exit Ruefull.*]

Jack. Who calls this man a miser?

Lady P. I am in love with him; he has won my heart for ever.

Blush. 'Tis a rough humour, but a most benevolent nature.

Sir Jeff. Sister Phœbe, what do you think of all this?

Phœbe. I think it a mere mouthful of moonshine; true lunatic's diet; the cookery of a crackt brain; froth to feed fools with;—you will find a better legacy in Don Diego's will: the man is in his dotage.

Sir Jeff. A word in your ear.—You are kill for Mr. Latimer?

Phœbe. I am.

Sir Jeff. Positively?

Phœbe. Peremptorily.

Sir Jeff. Here's my hand, then: my daughter marries Francis Latimer's son, or I'll make the house too hot to hold her. [*Exit.*]

Phœbe. So far all is safe—but I don't like these whisperings:—I must interrupt their conference.

Aside.

Mr.

Mr. Blushenly !—Niece Paragon !—You will forgive me, but—

Blush. Stay, Madam, let me speak a word in private with your aunt. (*to Lady Paragon.*)—

Mrs. Phœbe, you betray yourself by this impatience ; leave me, if you please, with Lady Paragon.

Phœbe. Why must I leave you ?

Blush. Because—because you must.

Phœbe. Sure—You're grown very peremptory.

Blush. I make it my condition—my request—will that suffice.

Phœbe. Well !—but you'll keep faith with me—you'll remember !—I'm gone.—How provokingly handsome she looks ! I can't bear the sight of her. (*aside*) [Exit.

Blushenly and Lady Paragon remain.

Blush. At last we are alone ; and now I press the moment that decides upon my hope.—This Latimer whom she so anxiously expects, whom your father recommends, and who is prepar'd to throw himself at your feet, is now in this very house.

Lady P. Well, if he is, what then ? Nor he nor they have supernatural power ; and human means shall never force me to a second sacrifice.

Blush. Are you so resolute ?

Lady P. My heart is pledg'd : you know the holder of it.

Blush. Then I have undertaken a hard task indeed ; for I am to move you for that very Latimer.

Lady P. Come, come, I've found you out : this is a return for my raillery about my aunt's strong box ; but, unless you can find pleasure in putting me to pain, I beg you to be serious.

Blush. I never was more serious in my life.

Lady P. Sir !—Mr. Blushenly !—I did not think you cou'd be cruel to me—We never meet again.

(*Going*)

Blush. Stop, I conjure you, stop !

Lady P. Why shou'd I ?—Oh Harry ! if you are still so blind as not to see the openest heart in na-

ture; legible by every eye but your's, I'll sooner do a violence to my sex's delicacy, by an avowal of my love, than leave it in your power to make a plea of ignorance.

Blush. You shall not do your dignity that wrong: I see and know your heart.

Lady P. You see it by false lights, you know it by unfair reports; else wou'd you treat it as you do?—No, you mistake a playful spirit for a levity of principle; you think me a coquette, who likes and dislikes by caprice, and whose favours, like false coin receiv'd in payment, you are impatient to pass off to any other dupe that will take them.

Blush. I were a brute without reason, cou'd I so judge of you. The playfulness of your spirit shews the purity of your nature; a heart like your's wou'd make an angel's face superfluous; I think with too much reverence of your virtue to recollect that you are beautiful.

Lady P. For which then of these two perfections do you reject me? Is it my virtue, or my beauty you revolt from?—Inconsistent flattery! Who throws away what he admires? who draws back from proffer'd happiness? either too proud to receive a blessing, or too suspicious to believe it is intended.

Blush. I neither have the pride nor the suspicion you describe; and I only regret there is any thing between us, which you have not the pleasure of bestowing.

Lady P. Why then do you assume a disinterestedness which cuts me to the heart? and with a cold air of prudence, as fruitless as it is cruel, attempt to turn inflexible affections from yourself to Latimer?

Blush. Because I am that Latimer.

Lady P. What do I hear?

Blush. Oh, let me clasp you to my heart! words are too weak to tell you how I love.

Lady P. Oh! what a head for stratagem is thine! —a notable experiment, to prove that it is day by

the light of the sun!—Oh Harry, Harry! if I could play the hypocrite, I wou'd revoke all I've said and turn your own game upon you:—but I have ways enough to be reveng'd; and, as you have been so very backward in discerning a Lady's advances, I'll take care you shall be as slow in making your own: you have seiz'd a strong post by surprize, but I have other defences in reserve; and, with my aunt Phœbe in front, I can still protract a surrender.

Blush. Whilst you look upon me with those eyes of love, I may defy your menaces, because I have your mercy to depend upon.

Lady P. Well, I protest you are insufferably vain.

Bl. And I swear you are insupportably handsome.

Lady P. Oh! then you are come down from your high flown sentiment to a little plain sense at last: you have drawn off the angel, and the woman appears: I am very glad to find that I am not quite too good to be flattered.

Blush. My soul doats on you: I adore you.

Lady P. Kneel then and worship at a distance.—I stand for privilege.—There lies your retreat; I keep this for my own.

Blush. Will you break parole with me? No, you have surrendered, and I'll carry off my prisoner, or perish.—Come with me, loveliest of women, come!

Lady P. I don't know that I dare; I shall grow afraid of you: I thought to stroak a lamb, and I've unchain'd a lion. [Exeunt.]

Enter Mrs. Phœbe and O'Flaherty.

Phœbe. There, there, there! did you see that Sir?

O'Fl. Oh! yes; mighty close truly, mighty close.

Phœbe. As Mr. Latimer's friend, methinks you can't be very well pleas'd with this discovery.

O'Fl. No indeed, and I am surpris'd to see you bear it so patiently; but you are of a sweet gentle nature, I perceive: and, as a reward for your patience, I can safely promise you shall hear no more of Blushenly after this night.

Phæbe. How so, how so? make me understand what you mean to do.

O'Fl. Never ask about it; never vex your lovely self—we have a way of our own in Ireland.

Phæbe. Explain yourself, I conjure you.

O'Fl. Why, you know there is such a thing in the world as a post-chaise—Well! and here you live upon the coast, hard by the sea, do you mind me?—Very well!—Mighty convenient, you'll allow, for shipping off contraband commodities, alias live-stock, for the continent.—Now if we can catch this young ram by the horns, and smuggle him into Dunkirk, we shall stop his breed at home, and nobody the wiser.

Phæbe. Horrible! wou'd you take the young man out of the kingdom? wou'd you murder him?

O'Fl. Why that shall be just as you like; it wou'd make his voyage the shorter.

Phæbe. Barbarian! I'll not suffer it; my blood chills with the idea.

O'Fl. Oh then take another recipe to warm it?—Elope with him yourself.

Phæbe. Myself!

O'Fl. 'Tis done every day; the most effectual mode in nature, to pique the jealousy of the young lady at home; she'll marry young Latimer, out of revenge, in a week! the only thing is, to put a small force upon your modesty; if you have friendship enough for your niece to do this, all difficulties are over.

Phæbe. Do you propose this in ridicule or insult to me?

O'Fl. Nay, if it shocks the delicacy of your nature, away with it at once; and, to say the truth I was afraid your modesty cou'd not put up with it. What will become of her reputation? says I to Mr. Latimer. Wou'd you put a fair innocent creature side by side with a tempting young rogue in a close marriage? I'm ashamed of you, says I.—Oh! I rattled him off roundly, for dreaming of it; for I was

knock him on the head at once, and save mischief.

Phæbe. Murder to save mischief.—Murder my reputation rather! inclose me in the odious post-chaise! let my innocence be your sacrifice, sooner than meditate an act so horrible: if no means else can be devis'd to separate him from Lady Paragon, behold me ready to devote myself a voluntary victim to preserve the honour and the interest of my family!

O'Fl. Why, then, as I'm a sinner, there is not a martyr in the calendar can go beyond you.

Oh sweet Phœbe, if you were of the right persuasion, you wou'd be the first saint of your name!

—Make up your mind, dear creature, for the journey: pack up a few trifles for your occasions by the way; put a good book in your pocket to keep the foul fiend at a distance; for, mind what I tell you, there's no trusting to these close carriages: as for holding him in talk about the weather, and the prospects, and all that, don't depend upon it, for the night will be as dark as a hedge; then there's such a cracking and a rattling with your iron-work, screaming goes for nothing in an English post-chaise.

Phæbe. Talk no more of such idle prospects; I have other resources than you know of; and shall take care to prevent mischief, both to him, to her, or myself. [Exit.]

O'Fl. Mercy on me! what a fermentation does a little learning raise in a female skull! No wonder that our fortune-hunters poach amongst these petticoated pedants; they fall into the snare like a pheasant from its perch. [Exit.]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

Enter Ruefull and Dumps.

RUEFULL.

GET you gone, firrah! I dismiss you from my service.

Dumps. Thank you heartily; 'tis the only kindness yo ever did me.

Ruefull. Leave the room.

Dumps. To leave is to obey—to obey is to serve.—You are no longer my master, therefore I do not leave the room.

Ruefull. Incomparable impudence!—This is as it shou'd be, it feeds my spleen, and serves to put me out of humour with the world.

Enter Jack Huffings.

Jack. Who finds fault with the world? I say 'tis a good world.

Ruefull. I never said it was not good enough for those who live in it.

Jack. Philosophers do but mar it.

Ruefull. Fox-hunters don't mend it.

Jack. You have a fellow here in your service of admirable humour.

Ruefull. He is an admirable fellow, if impudence be a recommendation—I have done with him: he is upon his promotion; if you have a mind for a purchase, you have nothing to do but to outbid the galls, and the lot is your own.

Dumps. Take me whilst you can have me, good Sir! if you put it by till to-morrow, you will have to seek for me at the bottom of the moat;—I shall lay this old scare-crow of a livery on the bank for a

mark: 'twill be in its seventh generation when I take leave of it, and every one of my predecessors left a family behind to be provided for:—give the devil his due, as the saying is, my master has some credit in this old coat; for 'tis made for all mankind, 'tis the only thing in our house that does not go by measure.

Jack. And can you find in your heart to part from this fellow?—

Ruefull. Parting from Dumps is like the practice of repentance; it costs some struggle to wean one's self from one's vices.—Fare thee well Dumps! I wish I were certain thou wou'dst never come back to me; for if thou dost, I shall surely take thee in, and 'twould be hard if the plague cou'd be had above once in one's life. [Exit.]

Jack. Well, Dumps, what are you pondering upon?

Dumps. A reprieve at the gallows is a very serious thing.

Jack. After all your changes in life, you have had one change for the better; I have no melancholy faces in my family.—You must have led the life of a dog in this old fellow's service.

Dumps. Bad enough; but if I had little food, I had less work; if I had no merriment, I had no care. A man may live in a prison till he likes it; when I was with my master, I pin'd for liberty; now I am loose, I long to go back again. In short, I don't know how it is; I had made up my mind, and, with your leave, I'll return to my execution.—You don't know that old gentleman's character, Sir.

Jack. I know what he passes for in the world's opinion—a miser and a man-hater.

Dumps. Miser enough I own he is, and has gone near to starve me; but then he starves himself, so I can't complain of him for that:—a man-hater he is, I don't deny it; but then he does good to people out of spite. He can be charitable enough whilst other folks take the praise of it; find him

I hadw ro...
out, and you are sure to lose his good-will. He was a rake in his young days.

Jack. Was he so? pr'ythee, if thou can'st, tell me something of his history.

Dumps. There's a Lady of family (I don't know who she is) that he behav'd very ill to; it lies on his conscience, and has turn'd his temper to vinegar: she had a child by him—when he went abroad, and left her;—he buried himself many years amongst the mountains, where the Swils live, as I believe.

Jack. Is the child alive?

Dumps. I know nothing of that: so much I know, that he has been making enquiries since I've been with him, but all to no purpose, as far as I can find. He has a brave estate, and a fine house upon it, but he lives in a poor little cottage-like place, with an old woman and myself, and sees nobody. Folks think him a white-witch or wizard, and are afraid to come near him.

Jack. He seems to have taken strongly to our young man here.

Dumps. Mr. Blushenly, you mean?

Jack. The same;—he is very earnest to promote a match between him and Lady Paragon.

Dumps. Is he so? why then you must excuse me, Sir, I can't think of leaving him: if he is Mr. Blushenly's friend, I'll follow him whilst there is land or water to carry me, and so I'll tell him;—here he comes.—*Peccavi, Domine!* Master, forgive me!

Enter Ruefull and Sir Jeffery.

Ruefull. Get thee gone, blockhead, get thee gone! I have no time to forgive thee.

Dumps. Rather say, you have no leisure to hold out.

Ruefull. I have better business to mind.

Dumps. 'Tis done with a word: pray, Sir, be quick about it, for repentance comes but seldom, and 'tis not good manners to keep a stranger waiting.

Ruefull. Well, well, well! I will keep thee on, if it be only to torment thee; thy pardon shall be thy punishment.—Away with thee!

[*Exit Dumps.*

Sir Jeff. Friend Jack, we are upon business.

Jack. A moment's patience!—Mr. Ruefull, give me your hand; nay, good Sir, give it me!—I honour you from my soul: I beg pardon for the false opinion I have had of you; I am a country bred fellow, 'tis true, but I have an honest heart, and a warm one—so Heaven bless you! that's enough.

[*Exit Jack.*

Ruefull. Ahem!—What's the matter with my eyes?—A plague upon the fellow, say I for putting me in humour with mankind.—Go on with your story—

Sir Jeff. I educated him in all points as my own son.

Ruefull. And at your own expence?

Sir Jeff. No, I was privately supplied by his mother for that purpose.

Ruefull. Thank you, Sir! thank you heartily for that; I shou'd else have been compell'd to confess it was a benevolent action—And who is his mother?—Stop, though! if it is one of your secrets, keep it to yourself.

Sir Jeff. It has been a secret, an inviolable secret, from the day of his birth to this hour;—it is now no longer so; for the death of his mother, who was a kinswoman of mine—

Ruefull. How's that? what do you say? a kinswoman of your's!

Sir Jeff. A near one; my cousin, Frances Latimer—

Ruefull. Sir!

Sir Jeff. What alarms you?

Ruefull. Is Blushenly the son of Mrs. Fanny Latimer? are you sure of this? have you no trick in it?

Sir Jeff. Trick! you may see her will.

Ruefull. Shew it to me.—Had she no other son, no other child but this? answer me this.

Sir Jeff. No other child.—After putting him into my hands, she left England, shut herself into a convent at Lisle in Flanders, and led an exemplary life in retirement from the world, tho' she wou'd never be induc'd to acknowledge her son, or discover his father.

Ruefull. Let me see the will, let me see the will.

Sir Jeff. Come into my closet with me, and you shall see it.

Ruefull. Shew me the way.—Heyday! what ails me? how my head swims!—Give me your arm.—So, so! 'tis better.

Sir Jeff. Bear up, my good friend; I see you are agitated by this discovery.

Ruefull. Do you think so? Can't an old man be sick suddenly, but you must spy a mystery in it?—Pshaw!

Exeunt.

Enter Lady Paragon and Blushenly.

Lady P. A situation of more hazard than mine cou'd not well be; for I was courted by my admirers, and neglected by my husband. Oh! let no woman wed a gamester! human misery cannot exceed it.—And now, my dear Harry, that I have given you a portrait of myself, the best I can say for it is, that it is a faithful likeness; some faulty tints there may be, which the pencil of vanity has thrown in, but they will fly off in time; and I flatter myself it is no where dash'd with the dark shades of guilt or deformity: as for the colours which love has given it, they will never fade in your keeping, for they are burnt in with fire, and can only perish with the piece itself.

Enter Mrs. Phoebe Latimer, as they are embracing.

Phæbe. I can support this no longer.—Mr. Blusshenly, you are a traitor! Lady Paragon, you are—I won't say what—I renounce you!

Blush. Recollect yourself, Madam! speak without passion, and I will answer you without reproach.

Phæbe. No Sir, I will not speak without passion, nor will I enter upon any explanation with you.—There is a couching lion in your path, ready to spring upon you, and destroy you both: an awful secret is in my keeping, nature extorts it from me; and before you rush into the crime of incest, know, young man—and tremble whilst I tell it—you are her father's son.—How now! have you no feeling to your situation, that you receive it thus calmly? If you can doubt it, I'll produce my brother, and he shall confirm it to your faces.

Lady P. Stay, Madam, if you please; there is no occasion to spread our family disgrace any further.

Phæbe. How you both stand!—Lady Paragon, I'm astonish'd at your insensibility: you don't even change colour.

Lady P. That's much indeed; for I'm very apt to blush for those who assert a falsehood to my face.

Phæbe. A falsehood! what do you insinuate?

Blush. Patience, I beseech you, and let us save you, whilst we can.—Your zeal for Mr. Latimer hurries you too far, when it puts you to invention and the abuse of truth—In some degree I take the fault upon myself; for I could sooner have told you that his interest in this Lady's affections stands on the security of honour, and does not want the aid of fiction—I am that happy man! I am that Latimer!

Phæbe. You! you!

Blush. O'Flaherty brought the proofs; Sir Jeffery will impart them to you.

Phæbe. Then I am ruin'd and undone!—I have expos'd myself to shame and derision:—I am sinking with confusion!

Lady P. No, my dear aunt, you shall not sink; we are your friends, and we will hold you up.

Phæbe. Impossible! I never can recall what I've said.

Blush. Nor shall you; for if time shall ever extinguish in your breast its partial affection for Blushenly, gratitude shall continue to record it in the heart of Latimer: therefore I pray you be at peace with yourself. What now is done, is done in secret; and whoever, in my hearing, dares to vent a sneer at the aunt of my Louisa, makes an enemy of me.

Phæbe. I thank you; you both are truly generous;—but I am much agitated, and wish to retire to my chamber.

Lady P. No, no, persist, if it be possible!—My father will soon be here; meet him with congratulations; meet the whole family!—Look! here comes O'Flaherty.

Phæbe. The man of all the world I cannot meet; he knows my weakest thoughts: save me from this meeting, if you have pity for me.

Enter O'Flaherty, and is met by Blushenly.

Blush. Stop, my good friend!—and, before a word can pass your lips, let me exact from you, as a soldier and a man of honour, to look at these Ladies, and if there be here present one, to whose thoughts in some weak moment (for we all have such moments) you have been privy, bury them in generous silence for ever, and approve yourself deserving of the favours of the sex, by your gallantry in concealing their foibles!

O'Fl. I understand you, Sir, perfectly; and when I pledge my honour, I pledge that, which neither to

man or woman has been ever forfeited—so there's an end of the matter.—Now be so good as to say which name you are pleas'd to be call'd by, and whether I am to give you joy as Mr. Latimer ; or how much longer I am to keep it secret.

Blush. You are fairly releas'd.

O'Fl. And does your Ladyship bear in mind our wager ?

Lady P. I acknowledge it lost, and will pay it the first moment I am able.

O'Fl. O dear heart alive ! what a joy it is to hear you say so !—but there is a part at least, and the best part too, which you can always pay on demand.

Lady P. Well then, if you wish it ; 'tis before you ; serve yourself.

O'Fl. May the blessing of blessings light upon your generous heart ! (*Salutes her respectfully*) May the cheek which I have touch'd be unstain'd with a tear ! And may your lips, which I had not the boldness to approach, be the sacred treasure of your husband !—Mrs. Phoebe Latimer, I hope I shall not offend, if I offer at the same presumption.—Be confident, dear Madam, that you have not in the world a more faithful humble servant than myself ! [*aside to her.*]

Phoebe. I have entire reliance on your honour. I begin to feel the return of tranquility.

Enter Sir Jeffery Latimer.

Lady P. Bless me, Sir, what ails you ? You alarm me.

Sir Jeff. Tears of joy, tears of joy ?—don't be alarm'd !—I am a father myself ; the feelings of nature are very strong.

Blush. What are you speaking of ?

Sir Jeff. The surprize was sudden, and overpower'd him ; but we have fetch'd him to himself : Jack Hustings open'd a vein—he can turn his hand to any thing—Here comes the good man !—Now let nobody be in a bustle ; recol-

lest yourself, Harry ! Let nobody be in a bustle—
Be as quiet and compos'd as I am.

(*Ruefull is led in between Jack Hustings and Dumps,
David attending behind with a chair.*)

Ruefull. Put the chair in its place again ! me-thinks you are very troublesome.—(*Dumps puts a bottle of salts to his nose.*) What does the blockhead thrust his salts up my nostrils for ? Keep e'm till my funeral, the'll serve to draw tears in your eyes.

Jack. How do you find yourself now, Sir ?

Ruefull. Exceedingly annoy'd by your officiousness.—Who made you a surgeon, I would fain know ? Why am I to be blooded like a calf at the whim of a butcher ?

Jack. You might have died, if we had not opened a vein.

Ruefull. Might have died !—well, and what might I do better ? I have always reckon'd upon one happy hour in life—the hour at the end of it.—Hark ye, Sir Jeffery, ask your daughter if she resolves upon marrying that young man by her side.

Sir Jeff. Her heart is center'd in that hope—I answer you in her own words.

Ruefull. Pray, Madam, let me ask you why you make this choice ?

Lady P. Because I know him, love him, and admire him ; his honour, gentleness, modesty, and benevolence, endear him to me.

Ruefull. And is this a world for such a man to live in ? With all these qualities, what sort of figure will he make in high life ?

Lady P. I shou'd be sorry if a man of your good sense gave into hackney'd invectives against high life ; I suspect it is the vices of the vulgar, which are precipitating this country to its grave !

Ruefull. It may be so ; I stand corrected. But it

And I know there is one objection to

some, capricious, old fellow, whom all the world sets down for a snarler and a miser.—I am his father.

Blush. Then nature is a faithful prophetess: I felt her at my heart.—Give me your blessing Sir!—My benefactor, friend, and father!

(throws himself on his knee.)

Ruefull. There, there! *(blesses him.)*—I do these offices scurvily; a fellow of no feeling wou'd make you a fine speech on the occasion.—I desire there may be no more said of the matter; it won't tell to my reputation—Old Jeffery knows all about it.—The world was a bad world, even in my young days, and I contributed to make it worse: I us'd your mother like a rascal, the more shame for me! She never forgave it, and I never ceas'd repenting of it: If she wou'd have told me where to find you, you shou'd not have been so long without a father.

O'Fl. O *Jubilate!* what a hurricane of good luck is fallen upon us.—Hark ye, Mr. Jack Hustings, you and I will make the corks crack for this.

Blush. Louisa, may I not present you to my father?

(Presents her.)

Ruefull. Happy be your lot, young lady! May the son repair the injuries of the father! and, by the honour of his conduct to your family, atone for the shame which mine has brought upon it!

Lady P. I am not the less confident of his conduct, when I find he is honourable and virtuous by inheritance.

Ruefull. I am only afraid he is too rich to be virtuous; if I was to consult his true interest I shou'd disinherit him.

Blush. Fear me not, Sir, while there is an honest man in this company in want of that which we abound in.—Captain O'Flaherty, I hold myself accountable for Lady Paragon's debts; they are gaming debts indeed, but no less debts of honour: She has lost a wager to you of a wedding-favour—It is not very elegantly made up, but it is cordially bestowed—I hope you'll wear it for her sake.

Ruefull. Well said, boy! you are my own son;—you have put my money out to use already.

O'Fl. Out upon it! 'tis a subsidy for a German Prince! I'll not touch a stiver of it. Zooks! man, I never wanted, money, for I've alway liv'd without it.

Lady P. Take it, however, if it be only to do honour to the friend that gives it.

Phœbe. Let me join interest with my niece in the request: and now let's see if you dare to hold out against the petition of the Ladies.

Sir Jeff. Sister Phœbe! sister Phœbe! give me your hand—by the bones of the Latimers, you are an honour to my family. Henceforward we strike up harmony and good fellowship for our lives.

Phœbe. Let us all be friends and all be happy!—Call in your neighbours, brother Jeffery, and let Merryfield-Hall blaze on this joyful occasion!—Mr. Hustings, as you are looking out amongst the old and ugly for a partner, let the fiddles strike up, and you and I will join in the dance.

Jack. 'Tis a bargain! now you are fair Phœbe again.—Away with all bickerings for ever! let those take them up that like 'em.—I shou'd wish to know what punishment you cou'd find in your heart to inflict, if I dared to repeat my offence in the face of this good company.

Lady P. I'll answer you that question—Transportation for life.

Sir Jeff. To the land of matrimony.

Jack. I am resign'd to my fate—Let the law take its course!

Sir Jeff. Get the warrants ready: Here is double duty for the Ordinary.

O'Fl. Ladies and Gentlemen, a word with you before you are turn'd off—I hope I am not to be your executor, for I have enough already on my hands with these papers.—Will you be my banker, old Gentleman! and lay out for a purchase of just such another little cot as your own; where, with a

rood of potatoes in my front, and an acre of bog
at my back, I can sit chirpping like an old cricket
in my chimney-corner, and ruminate on the oc-
currences of this happy day.



EP I L O G U E:

Written for Miss F A R R E N,

By E. T O P H A M, Esq;

*IN this gay age, when all the heart is waste,
And frighted Nature flies the realms of Taste,
Is there a well-bred dame, whose cheek discloses
The bloom—of Rouge, cold Cream, and Milk of Roses,
Who deigns these splendid side-boxes to grace,
In Figero feathers and Lunardi lace,
And, gently lolling on her favourite page,
Laughs—and talks somewhat louder than the Stage?
If some sweet girl—another Wexler's pride—
In pure simplicity should grace her side,
And feeling what she hears, devoid of art—
Drop a soft tear—expressive of the heart;
Wou'd not the fashion'd dame our child reprove,
And cry—" Indeed—you're vastly wrong—my love!
" What weep? O fie!"—I blush:—this strange dis-
order
" Will make fools think you enter'd with an Order!"
While in high life our hearts the fashions steel,
Too gay to listen, and too fine to feel—
Honest John Bull—before a sturdy elf—
Now claims no right of judging for himself;
To PUFFS from Theatres gives up his vote,
And kindly thinks all true—because 'tis wrote;
For when no plaudits strike our duller ear,
The Papers bear a voice we cannot hear—
And when for seats no beauties disagree,
They see a croud, alas! we cannot see;
—And while you clamber o'er the empty rows,
In sweet ADVERTISEMENT—the House o'erflows!
Puff is the word: where fame is not a breath,
—How many an Actress Puff has sav'd from death?*

And

EPILOGUE.

*And Actors for whom Mutes were full enough,
Have risen ALEXANDERS—from a Puff!
While generous paragraphs all-lavish give
Sums Total, which our Treasurers ne'er receive.*

*With added force—the other House comes after—
Here, dead with grief, you there revive with laughter
Beaumarchais's Muse—a favourite of the nation—
Now rises like some Bishop—by translation.*

*Jest, repartee, and stage effect still tease you,
With wit made English, and with French made easy.
Say, then—as humble copyists—shall WE borrow
A sketch of what some pens may say to-morrow?*

“ The Comedy—where laughter knows no pause—

“ Went off with most astonishing applause!

“ The dresses, scenery—and situation,

“ Exceeded all the bounds of commendation!

“ The great demand for side-boxes, from Monday

“ Will know no intermission—but on Sunday!

*“ The eighth, tenth, twentieth nights—each place is
“ chosen—*

“ About the fiftieth you may pop your nose in.

“ The Actors all were wonderfully clever;

“ The like was never seen, nor heard—no never.

“ Miss Farren's widow—above all—d'ye see,

“ Was—YOU must fill that vacancy for ME!”

FINIS.

U. S. C. O. J. 192

[The page contains several lines of extremely faint, illegible handwriting, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]



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